

COMMONSENSE MANDATE FOR ACTION ON EDUCATION BEING IGNORED

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the fact that the common-sense mandate for action on education is being ignored here in Washington. We have an attempt to divert the attention of the American people from what is one of our most important issues.

In discussing this very important issue of education and the fact that there is an attempt to make us forget how important it is and forget that there is nothing but inaction being proposed about it here in Washington, I think we ought to discuss a few seemingly unrelated issues.

The fact that India has just exploded a nuclear device is important to today's topic. The fact that the CIA failed to detect the test preparation is important. The fact that the Senate passed today something called the American Competitiveness Act, which calls for making America competitive by bringing in foreigners, foreign professionals in the information technology industry.

The American Competitiveness Act is an example of outrageous language being used here in Washington, ridiculous language. It is called the American Competitiveness Act, and yet at the heart of the act is the provision which requires an increase in the quotas for visas for information technology professionals from foreign countries, so they can come in and meet our needs in this critical area of information technology workers.

American Competitiveness Act for that kind of piece of legislation is about as ridiculous as the Paycheck Protection Act which my colleagues were talking about before.

The Paycheck Protection Act is an act whereby they are going to try to censor unions in this country. Unions represent maybe 15 to 16 million people. They should be censored in terms of their voice in the political arena. Yet, the people who give the most money to the political process, corporations, millions of Americans have their stock in corporations, there is nothing in the legislation, no discussion at all about how corporate stockholders, people who own shares in corporations should be able to also have protection.

I do not think protection is warranted in either case. It is an attempt to curb the debate and silence one segment of the American electorate.

But how does this relate to education? Let us go back to India. India exploded a nuclear device. The CIA failed to detect a test. We had a discussion just a few days ago on the floor of this House about the CIA's budget. We

are not sure what it is, because it is secret, but we have a good idea. We proposed to cut the CIA budget by 5 percent. We have begun to compromise. In previous years we have asked for 10 percent, but this year we went down to 5 percent.

We calculated a 5 percent cut would be about \$1.3 billion. We calculated that with \$1.3 billion we can build a junior high school or high school which costs about \$10 million to build. They may cost a little more in New York, but most parts of the country, you can build a substantial school. For \$10 million, we calculated 130 schools.

We are talking about cutting the waste out of the CIA budget in order to build schools. So there was a link we made to education. But we had an overwhelming vote against our amendment to cut the CIA in order to use the money for better purposes.

I agree with the gentlemen over here before. The gentlemen were talking about the bigness of American government. The government spends too much money. The taxes are too high. The taxes are certainly much too high for people at the lower end of the scale, and we should move to try to cut taxes.

You cannot cut taxes if you are going to continue to insist that the CIA operate at a budget between \$27 billion and \$30 billion. But the CIA had to be funded at the same level because the people on the floor who were members of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence said they need this money, and one of the reasons they need this money is because they must fight nuclear proliferation.

As the last superpower in the world, we are the only power that has the capability of detecting nuclear tests or preparation for nuclear tests. We can monitor nuclear tests throughout the world.

One of the great dangers throughout this world is nuclear proliferation. I agree, nuclear proliferation is one of the great dangers of this world. It is an international matter. It is of international concern. I am proud of the fact that the CIA says they have the capability to monitor nuclear proliferation. That is one of their major priorities, one of the highest priorities.

If that is the highest priority, and if the overwhelming majority of the Members of the House voted, as they have in previous years, to maintain the CIA budget at the same level it was during the Cold War, and to do that because of its vital function in detecting nuclear proliferation, why did they fail to detect the test preparation in India?

Why did we hear it on CNN? CNN told the American people that India had exploded a nuclear device, nuclear weapon, whatever; a nuclear explosion had taken place. We got it on CNN. Would it be cheaper to contract part of the function of the CIA to CNN and save that money that we were talking about, \$1.3 billion, to build 130 schools?

The explanation of the CIA is that India did not play fair, you know. We

are monitoring nuclear activity all over the globe, but India did not play fair. The people in India made preparations, a highly visible amount of activity at another site where they launched rockets. So the CIA thought India was prepared to launch a rocket, so that they focused their cameras, their monitoring, whatever, on that site, and they overlooked the Indian preparation for a nuclear test.

The CIA, which has almost \$30 billion for a budget, and part of this money is for the satellites, reconnaissance satellites that we maintain in the sky, why did they miss it? Because the Indians did not play fair. The explanation we get is they did not play fair. They sneaked and exploded their device, prepared while we were looking somewhere else, at another possible explosion.

Why is our sophisticated CIA, absorbing almost \$30 billion, unable to play the game that we used to play when we were kids? We played cops and robbers and cowboys and Indians or played war. You take a big rock and throw it over there. The guys looking for you will go over there, while you can come in behind them and attack them. This is the oldest game in the world, a diversionary tactic, the kind the Indians used on the CIA.

Why am I talking about that if I want to alert the American people to the fact that education, one of our highest priorities, is being ignored? Because our money is being wasted in this direction.

There is another linkage, also. India now is proud of the fact that they are reasserting their nuclear power status. The people of India danced in the street to celebrate the nuclear explosion.

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Overwhelmingly the party in power has received approval from the people, and some political pundits are estimating that this party will finally consolidate power in India. India has had a lot of turmoil politically, and now this party now in power, because of their nuclear explosion, will consolidate their power and remain in power for a long time. You have another set of demagogues using something like war or something close to war and the preparation for war to unite the nation behind them.

What is the impact going to be across the world? If India is going to show their nuclear muscle, then right next to it is Pakistan. They want to do their test. How can you argue morally that Iran should not go ahead and do their testing and have nuclear weapons? Saddam Hussein is waiting for us to get tired of monitoring his country so he can go back to building his nuclear capacity.

There are many other nations in the world that would like to buy technology and get into the game. So nuclear proliferation, which, by the way, the dangers of it might have nothing to do with war. Maybe they will not start

a war, but the fact that the bombs or devices are exploding means that the radioactive debris is being thrown into the atmosphere, being thrown into the oceans. And if El Nino taught us anything, it taught us that the world is very small, and ocean currents in one part of the world, when they get out of whack, they are affecting other parts of the world. They throw off the weather patterns.

The volcanoes recently have taught us how volcanoes in one part of the world darken the sky for long periods of time, as if we did not know it from studies of ancient catastrophes, in the last four or five years they have changed the weather patterns.

So nuclear tests, which produce radioactivity, are a concern to all of us. We lived under the threat of a bomb for a long time, that one nuclear power, the Soviet Union, might attack the United States, or vice versa, and we would be thrown into a nuclear holocaust. We did not want that, and it affected the psychology of a whole lot of people of my generation and a lot of people for a long time. We were happy to see that come to an end, the threat of the two great superpowers going to war and what that would do in terms of the devastation of the earth.

Now we are going to have slow poisoning by nuclear proliferation, as one nation after another joins the club. India, the home of Gandhi. If India, the home of Gandhi, passive resistance, the place where Martin Luther King got his inspiration, and numerous other leaders of the world, including Nelson Mandela, if India now is going to beat its chest as a nuclear power and the people of India are going to dance in the streets to celebrate the politicians who have made them a nuclear power, then where can we look to in the world for hope? China will certainly increase their explosions, and on and on it goes.

India is important for another reason. I just mentioned the passage of the American Competitiveness Act by the Senate, that outrageous name they used, "American Competitiveness Act."

What is it? It is to increase the quota of foreign workers, professionals in information technology, who can come into the country and get us out of a jam because we have inadequate education. Our educational system has not produced enough information technology workers. We now have a crisis. So American competitiveness is all tied up with foreign professionals who are coming in.

By the way, as they increase the quotas for foreign professionals to come in, they are going to decrease the quota in other areas, so people who are waiting for their families, to reunite families, and other areas of immigration are going to be hurt.

But this great act of improving American competitiveness is going to benefit India primarily. The largest number of information technology workers now in this country from a

foreign country are from India, and the largest number who will come in under this new increase in the number who can come in, I think 30,000, the quota is being increased by 30,000, and over the next few years it will be brought down back to 20,000, but for a long period of time you can have 20,000 per year. To jump it off you are going to have 30,000 more than already. Most of them come from India, and it is likely that, in the future, that same ratio is going to be there.

India is the place which has seen fit, wisely so, to educate a large segment of their population for the age of computers. Computer science, all of the things related to computers and information technology, India has seen fit, they saw the need, and they have a large body of human capital to spread throughout the world, certainly the English-speaking world.

Indians speak English, and that gives them an edge over the information technology professionals that might come from the former Soviet Union or from other parts of central Europe. They speak English. We need English-speaking professionals in the information technology sector. So India will send to America more and more information technology workers.

Do you discern a circle here? They will be in our top industries. They will acquire more know-how. They will be able to take that know-how back to India. If India's nuclear capability is rather primitive now in comparison to the United States's nuclear capability or the Soviet Union's nuclear capability, then certainly when we get through importing Indian information technology workers, high-tech workers, when we finish with that process, then we will have trained all that they need.

So the Indian government now in power, which wants to stay in power as a major militaristic nuclear power and is going to consolidate its hold on the government, is following a pattern not too dissimilar from the pattern of Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein made a dramatic attempt, in a very short period of time, to acquire the most modern kinds of weapons available, and now India is staking its future politically on being able to say it is a great military power. And we are going to help train them. We are going to call the training process the American Competitiveness Act, that was passed by the Senate today, and they expect it to pass the House of Representatives also.

Why not, instead of importing workers for information technology, why not train them here in this country? Why not improve our own school system here in this country so that we are able to first allow young people coming out of our schools to be able to get very good jobs, that are also beneficial for the overall American economy, and also beneficial for any national security items that we are concerned with? Why not do that instead?

The common sense mandate for action on education is being ignored. The American people think it makes a lot of sense to have more attention paid to our education system. The American people repeatedly show in the polls, in the focus groups, that they are concerned about education.

Why are the leaders of the Republican majority, who are in control of the Congress, why are they ignoring the mandate of the people? Why are they failing to honor the results of the polls? They read the same polls that the Democrats read. Republicans and Democrats both know that education is very high on the agenda of the American people. Why are we ignoring it?

Why are we turning away from a great window of opportunity at this point in history? Not only are the American people concerned about education and clearly show this is a popular concern, but we now have the resources, we now have the revenue, to address some of these critical problems in education.

Why do we not address the problem of school construction that the President has proposed we address? He proposed a very meager program, \$22 billion, but it is not going to come from the Treasury. All of it, in fact, the \$22 billion construction program, is a program where the private sector would provide the money and the government would provide tax credits to compensate the private sector for the interest.

So it is not a great amount of money that is going to be taken out of the Treasury immediately; it is over a long period of time, paying back the interest as the local education groups, agencies and the States borrow from this pool, where they pay no interest. They get the money with no interest. The interest will be paid through a tax credit vehicle.

Very clever, Mr. President. I would like to see more money directly appropriated for education, so the whole question of borrowing by the local school districts and the states will not have to be an obstacle to action. But in this atmosphere, we will take your \$22 billion borrowing program. The Republican majority says no; they refuse to consider it. They turned away from this window of opportunity.

We could go further and not have to borrow the money because we have a surplus. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about another secret that nobody wants to discuss here. They do not want to discuss the CIA's failure to detect the Indian nuclear tests. Also they do not want to discuss the fact that we have a budget surplus, more revenue than expenditures anticipated of between \$50 and \$60 billion in the coming budget year.

No less than \$50 billion will be available because it is not needed in the current budget scheme. There will be a surplus, revenue greater than expenditure, of at least \$50 billion.

Why can we not at this point address the compelling problems of our schools

with some of that money? Nobody wants to talk about it here. It is amazing how quiet the Members of my party are about it.

The President in his State of the Union address said any surplus should be dedicated, first of all, to Social Security. I agree with the President. He was anticipating a \$8 billion surplus at that time. That was what the budget office was telling us, \$8 billion.

Whether it is \$8 billion or more, I think Social Security should get a high priority. But since you have a window of opportunity to do something about the critical problems of education with some of this money, I would like to offer a concrete proposal to both parties, my party and the Republican majority.

The budget surplus is a golden opportunity. The common sense mandate for use of this surplus should be one-fourth for Social Security, one-fourth for our Social Security contingency fund. That is what I think the President and other leaders have in mind. Social Security does not need any help for a long time to come. We are talking about 20 to 30 years before the calculations show that Social Security may be in trouble.

Well, let us start getting ready for the trouble. Let us set aside a contingency fund, or whatever else they have in mind, to guarantee that Social Security never has a problem. Let us take one-fourth of the surplus for Social Security.

Let us take one-fourth of the surplus for a tax cut for families earning less than \$30,000. You want a tax cut? Give the tax cut where it is needed most. Families earning less than \$30,000 should be given priority. If you are going to give tax cuts to others, start at \$30,000 and come on up.

I think we would all agree that the American people deserve some type of tax cut. You could even have a tax cut without the surplus, because most of our income taxes come from what you call earned income, the earned income of families that are working families.

We have a whole pot of money that is not taxed very much, and that is the unearned income. These are not my terms. "Earned income," "unearned income" were invented many years ago. It is not a socialist term or the term of a New York liberal. It is a general economic term.

Earned income is what you receive as a result of working for wages, what you get in a paycheck and what you get as a consultant fee. I even think that the millions of dollars that a boxer earned in the ring is earned income. The millions of dollars that the sports figures on the football, baseball or basketball field earn, that is earned income. They sweat for it. I guess it goes back to the Bible and the mandate that we earn our living by the sweat of our brow. That is a certain category of money.

Unearned income, and I think the term originally had some kind of undesirable feature, unearned income is what people get through investments

and various other machinations that produce money. Not machinations, various other devices that produce money without them working for it on a daily basis, a weekly basis, out there on the ball field, et cetera.

So unearned income on investments, primarily the money earned on the stock market is the best example of unearned income, the stock market, bonds, it is well-known where unearned income comes from.

If you start looking closely at unearned income, you will find only a tiny portion of unearned income is taxed. Most of it escapes taxes. So if you really want to look for a place to give a tax cut to families earning \$50,000 or less, \$30,000, then increase the amount of taxes on the unearned income and greatly decrease the amount on the earned income.

But I am not here to discuss that tonight. I just want to make the point we could have a tax cut. We could satisfy the top agenda items of both parties. Social Security, a tax cut, one-fourth to Social Security, one-fourth for a tax cut, and the final two-fourths, there are four fourths, you know, the final two-fourths for education initiatives, such as the construction initiative of the President, such as smaller class sizes than that have been proposed by the President, such as the reading initiative proposed by the President, such as an increase for increasing funds for technology in the schools, wiring the schools.

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School construction is vital. There is a lot of discussion about improving education and the Republicans are locked in on their own approach with vouchers, and other people talk about phonics versus other methods of teaching reading. The Committee on Appropriations passed a bill that called for the whole school approach a couple of years ago, and there are a lot of approaches, initiatives, innovations, and most of them might have merit, but at the heart of providing an education for young people should be the provision of a safe place to sit and study, a safe place for the teacher and student to get together, a safe place for students to look forward to when they leave home in the morning, and certainly in the poorest areas, the school ought to be a great improvement over the home environment of the poorest youngsters.

We should not go to school and find we are crowded into rooms unreasonably. We should not have 45, 50 children in one room. We should not have to go to school and find that there are no rooms for some classes, and classes have to be conducted in the hallway or in the portion of the bathroom, the restroom. We should not go to school and find ourselves being put in a situation where one has to eat lunch at 10 o'clock in the morning.

There are a large number of schools in New York City where the students have to eat lunch at 10 o'clock in the

morning because the lunch room was not built to accommodate the large numbers of children in that school, a school built for 500 has 1,000 pupils. The lunch room can only accommodate a certain number, so they have to go in shifts, and in order to get them all in, the shift process has to start at 10 o'clock in the morning. That is child abuse, to make a child eat lunch at 10 o'clock in the morning. I think that should directly affect the physiology and the health of a child. They had breakfast at home or at school and they have to eat their lunch at 10 o'clock in the morning. I think the children on the other end, if we have to spread that over cycles, so that the last group is eating at 1:30 or 2 o'clock, they are being abused. They are hungry, starving by the time they get to 1:30 or 2 o'clock.

We are doing these kinds of things, we are sending children to schools that have asbestos problems, we are sending children to schools that have lead pipe problems, we are sending children to schools that are 100 years old in New York, we are sending children to schools that have leaky roofs, we are sending children to schools in New York and other places that have coal-burning furnaces, coal-burning furnaces, still. Mr. Speaker, if a school has a coal-burning furnace, it is probably a very old school.

I brought this subject up with the head of the Environmental Protection Agency here in Washington and she was appalled that there are still coal-burning furnaces in schools. Well, we only have about 285 coal-burning schools in New York, out of the 1,100 about 285 are still burning coal in furnaces, which means that the lungs of the children are directly affected, because if one has ever been in a place that is burning coal, when I first bought my first house it had a coal burning furnace, I had to go down and stoke up the fire, we put in all kinds of filters to keep the thing clean, filters at the furnace level and filters at the level of the register, but the coal dust gets through anyhow.

If a child sits in a school all year long during the winter season while the furnace is burning coal, they are going to get coal dust in their lungs. If a child has to spend 6 years in school from the 1st grade to the 6th grade, or the 6th grade to the 12th grade, they are going to get plenty of coal dust in their lungs and they are going to have difficulties with health later on that nobody is going to quite understand. The child does not smoke, but the coal dust is going to be there creating a problem.

We have concrete evidence of what is happening right now, because the high asthma rate in New York City is unparalleled to other big cities who have problems I am sure with coal burning schools also.

The other pollution in the air now, as it grows greater, the coal-burning furnaces and that kind of pollution has an

even greater affect, concentrated at places where children are gathered. So construction, if we do not do anything about a safe place to study, if we do not get rid of dangerous situations, then do not talk about the phonics method versus some other method of teaching reading. Do not think that we are going to solve the problem if we come in with a mandate that there will be no more social promotion if we mandate testing nationally or locally.

The problem will not be solved with these kinds of actions, although some of them may be highly desirable. First, we have to make a commitment to have every child in America in a safe place to study, a place conducive to study, and then we have to move to a place which is enhanced with technology, with equipment for a science lab, with books that are not 30, 40 years old. These basic needs are still not being met.

Now, in 1996, 1994 to 1996, the Republican majority argued that if we have the government take some initiatives to help education in some meaningful way, then we are going to bankrupt the country or we are going to put our grandchildren and our great grandchildren into debt. They made it appear that any actions by the Department of Education were an immediate threat to the economy of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, with a \$50 billion surplus, we cannot tell that lie anymore. With a \$50 billion surplus, we cannot say that money is the problem. With a \$50 billion surplus, the question is, why do we not want all the children of America to have a decent place to study, a decent place to have teachers teach them? Why do we not want all the children of America to have the opportunity to learn? We may talk about increasing the testing, but that is putting the burden on the backs of the students. We may talk about standardized curriculums and more challenging curriculums, but again, that is putting the burden on the students, and those are challenges that students ought to meet.

They ought to meet the more challenging curriculum standards and they ought to be able to pass the tests. I am not against national testing forever. Somewhere down the line I would support national testing if we first deal with opportunity to learn standards. If we first say to every State and every local school board, every child should have these opportunities to learn. First, they should have a facility, a school which is safe, which is conducive to study, which has the necessary equipment and books, which has modern technology which really prepares them for the world they are going to be living in in the 21st century; all of these things are doable. It does not require magic. The money is there. All we need is two-fourths: One-fourth for education initiatives such as smaller class sizes, education for technology, et cetera, and another fourth for school

construction. This is assuming we are going to have \$50 billion or more.

Mr. Speaker, if it were only \$8 billion, as the President anticipated when he made the State of the Union address, then I would say let us give it all to Social Security, but it is far more than \$8 billion, so here is a concrete proposal. The mandate for the surplus is to meet the needs as reflected by the polls and the focus groups, and Americans think Social Security is very important, they are worried about it. We have made them worry even more because we have made statements about the need to change things and privatize Social Security and do things which would erode the credibility of Social Security for the future. Let us address one-fourth of whatever the surplus is to Social Security, one-fourth to a tax cut on the earned income of families earning less than \$30,000, start with them and go up; one-fourth for education initiatives such as smaller class sizes and education technology, and one-fourth for school construction.

Voters of America, do not let this session of Congress end without some action on education in this direction. There is no reason why we should not have decent schools for all children in America.

For us to have the revenue available, to have the resources and refuse to use them is a savage act. It is savage behavior for the responsible leaders who make decisions about how the resources of this country are going to be used for them to turn away from the needs of these students and children in America who are attending coal-burning schools, 100-year-old schools, schools that are not safe, schools that are not conducive to learning, schools that have no decent science labs, et cetera. It is a savage act.

Jonathan Kozol wrote a book some time ago called *Savage Inequalities*. It is a book about the inequalities of the school systems in New York City. *Savage Inequalities*. In the same city, a public school in one part of the city had all of the modern conveniences, decent facilities, et cetera, et cetera. Not too far away, in the same borough, there were schools and in some other cities around the country the schools actually had to be closed down because when it rained. East Saint Louis was one of the examples he gave. When it rained, they literally had the rain pouring into the schools, a flood of rain pouring into the schools, and these kinds of conditions still exists, not only in rural schools and in inner city schools, but there are some suburban schools that are grossly in need of improvement and repair, and in some cases, they need to build new ones.

It would be savage for the American power structure, Members of Congress, the executive branch, the private sector leaders, to allow this to continue at a time when we have the revenue, we have the resources. Instead of looking at the obvious needs for more school construction and more resources for

smaller class sizes, the Republican majority is locked into an irrational, illogical, dogmatic policy related to vouchers and privatization. They are dogmatic about it. It is like a superstition that one cannot touch. They refuse to deal with reality. They are swimming against public opinion. They are swimming against the tide of public opinion in their own district.

I have often approached my Republican colleagues on the Committee on Education and the Workforce and said, look, you are advocating vouchers as the only solution to the improvement of the American public schools. You want to make the public schools not public anymore; you want to make the people of America not focus their attention on improving their public schools, but you want to use vouchers and take them somewhere else. Why do you not propose that for your district? And I make the challenge here. Every Republican who proposes vouchers, why do you not propose that in your district where you run for office? Why do you not push vouchers there?

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What I have learned is that in the majority of the districts represented by the members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, their constituents have said to them, we are not interested in vouchers. We were not interested in vouchers. We have good public schools, or we have schools that need improvement, and we are willing to work to improve our public schools.

Some of them confess to me, I have good schools in my district, they say. I do not need vouchers. My answer to that, my response to that, is if you have good schools and you do not need vouchers, then let me have good schools in my district. Let us have good schools everywhere so nobody will need vouchers. Let us take the steps necessary to create opportunities to learn for all children everywhere. Let us improve the public schools and stop the voucher dogma.

I think the Republican majority suffers from something similar to what Lysenko pushed in the Soviet Union. Lysenko was a biologist who insisted that the environment is almost totally the determining factor of what happens to living organisms. Lysenko was a geneticist, an agronomist from the Ukraine. He developed a doctrine compounded of Darwinism and the work of Michurin, that heredity can be changed by good husbandry.

As director of the Institute of Genetics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, he declared the accepted Mendelian theory was erroneous, and he ruthlessly silenced any Soviet geneticist who opposed him. He endured on the Soviet science scene and was a major dictator of science theory until Nikita Krushchev came to power in 1965.

In the whole Stalinist era, they wrecked the agriculture of the Soviet Union by insisting that Lysenko was right and everybody had to follow

Lysenko. The rest of the world's scientists were giving due consideration to heredity as a factor in the way living organisms developed so they could improve the plants and the animal stocks. And agriculture prospered, of course, in this country, because science was free and they followed where science went. But Lysenko said no, and they had scientists who were put in jail for challenging Lysenko.

The Republican Party is suffering from Lysenkoism when it comes to the public schools. When it comes to improving schools in America, they will not look to the right or to the left. They insist vouchers and privatization are the only answer.

They have forced vouchers down the throats of the citizens of the District of Columbia. People here in Washington, in the District of Columbia, they took a vote. They had a referendum on the question of whether they wanted vouchers or not. They overwhelmingly voted no, they did not want vouchers. They were willing to entertain another experiment to make the public schools more competitive and to get some innovation into the bureaucratic structure.

They wanted to challenge the structure by having charter schools, some public schools that would be run by a group of individuals who would make policy for the school and determine how the school is run, in accordance with certain principles and standards that the District of Columbia sets.

That is a movement that is in effect across the country in at least 25 States. New York does not have it yet, but charter schools were accepted by the people of Washington as a way to experiment and to encourage improvement of our public schools.

Ninety-five percent of the children of America will go to public schools in the next 10 years. No matter what is done, even if you had an implementation of the voucher program on a large scale, you could not do it in the next 10 to 20 years to any great degree, so 90 to 95 percent of our children are going to go to public schools. Let us improve the public schools.

My colleague in the Congress who now has retired, Floyd Flake, is an advocate for vouchers all over the country. He will tell us that polls show that large numbers of African American parents favor vouchers. Why do they favor vouchers? Because they are fed up, overwhelmed, they do not think they can improve public schools, and they are the ones who say, I will take anything, I will try anything.

Let us lay aside my problem with vouchers and say, okay, what if you decided to implement vouchers tomorrow in Floyd Flake's school district? Congressman Flake is a minister, has a big cathedral, does a very good job of taking care of his parishioners. They have a school. The school already has a long waiting list.

If we give him vouchers, if we give students in that area vouchers and say,

go to Congressman Flake, go to his school, he cannot take any more. Or suppose we give him the authority to expand outside of his school, all the vouchers you need. You have a system that the parents believe in. Whatever you are doing is working. Go to it. What would happen? Pastor Flake would have to create a bureaucracy. He would have to set up a personnel system. He would have to set up a custodian system. He would have to do all the things that a local education agency does. He would run into the same problems. He would have to recruit large numbers of teachers. He could not personally interview them all. He could not get the same quality that he gets in his church school.

There are a number of problems that have to be solved by public policy action, and if we turn the system over to the private sector, to the church, whoever, they are going to have the same problems. What they do now is skim across the top and get the best students, in many cases, but certainly a select number of students. That cannot solve the problem.

I have said these things many times here. I hate to go on and on. But I think it would be savage for this Congress to go on doing the outrageous kinds of things we have been doing. We have just passed a bill where we are going to make America competitive by going outside. Instead of developing the brain power here, we want to go outside.

It is not just the public schools, but we are attacking our own higher education institutions. We passed the Higher Education Assistance Act 2 weeks ago, and it had no new initiatives in it to deal with the problem that America needs more and more people who are college-educated. Instead, we are playing with affirmative action, trying to destroy diversity in the universities. For some kind of irrational reasons, we are attacking the higher education system to make it smaller instead of larger.

In New York City, they are not attacking affirmative action, they do not use the term "affirmative action," but there is a broad-scale attack on the country's oldest public university, City University of New York. It is the oldest public university, and there is a sustained attack to try to downsize and gut that institution. That is what the board of trustees is being forced to do right now. Massive political intervention has taken place, and people on the board of trustees are carrying out orders from above. In the interests of saving money, they say, they want to greatly downsize the City University of New York.

How are they going to do it? Set new standards for all the senior colleges. You cannot get in if you need remediation. You can get into Yale, Harvard, and a few other colleges across the country if you need some remediation. Remediation, 80 percent of the schools in the United States have some form of

remediation, because by now we know in this world that people do not come packaged perfectly. They do not have an excellent student in science and math, an excellent student in verbal reasoning, an excellent student in languages. Lots of students have some deficiencies, or they cannot excel in all three of those. That is recognized.

In this kind of high-tech economy, we do not want to cut off our nose to spite our face. Why get rid of talented people because they have one thing missing? We need the creativity of students, no matter what their forte may be, no matter how strong they are in one area versus another, if they are creative. What makes the American economy go, what makes the high-tech industry go, is creativity.

Bill Gates and his fellow entrepreneurs were not people who would pass all the tests for assessment as they went into college. They were not people who necessarily would score highest on the highest tests. They were people who had imagination, and the Bill Gates of today is not using his math and science skills to build one of the world's largest businesses, or probably the largest, most profitable business in the world. He is now not using algebra, trigonometry, calculus, differential equations. That has nothing to do with his ability to maneuver this system, to organize large numbers of people and focus them on various tasks, that has now led to him being accused of monopolizing and threatening certain segments of the economy.

These are creative people from many walks of life. That is what makes America go. We do not score as high across the world on a lot of these tests that are given. I think we should not take that lightly. Our students should score higher on math and science, and they should compete with other students throughout the rest of the world, but what they cannot measure is creativity, creativity. Our students are probably the most creative in the world. That is how our economy, with its flexibility, is able to keep growing when other economies are having great difficulty.

So City College, City University of New York, the trustees are also going to be guilty of savage behavior. It will be a savage policy to shut out large numbers of students by saying that they cannot enter any one of the senior colleges if they need remediation.

They have gone further to say the 2-year colleges, you can only have remediation for a little while, or the proposal is being pushed by the mayor that says the colleges should not have remediation programs at all. There should be institutes that provide remediation. They should be summer institutes. You have a young person who comes out of high school who may be creative, have talent, which is what the City University has shown.

Eighty percent of the students do graduate. A large number have deficiencies when they come in as freshmen, but the new atmosphere of the

college campus is a new beginning for the student. Their latent talents, creativity, energy, is changed by being there on a college campus.

If you say to the student when he comes out of high school, you cannot get into college, you cannot set foot on the campus until you spend the summer in an institute to make certain that you pass the assessment tests in math, writing, languages, whatever, reading, you will turn off large numbers.

The California policy of anti-affirmative action, anti-diversity, has cut away large numbers of minority students, Hispanic and African American students. City University will chop off the head of opportunity for even more with this remediation policy.

I spoke to the Board of Trustees of City University on April 20. I am a Congressman. I have been on the Committee on Education and the Work Force for 16 years. I thought they might give me a little more than 3 minutes, especially since I chided them for not bothering to come to Washington all during the time when we were considering the Higher Education Assistance Act.

In previous years, and we consider the Higher Education Assistance Act every 5 years, in the previous 2 times we have reauthorized the Act, we have had representatives from the City University of New York, the State University of New York. New York was very much absent this time in the consideration of the most important piece of higher education legislation. They were not there.

I chided them for not coming to us, but here I was in front of them. I hoped they would give me more than 3 minutes, but they did not. I think the chairman did give me an extra minute, so I had 4 minutes to speak. The bureaucratic secretary sat there and nearly had a heart attack because the chairman was allowing the Congressman who sits on the Education Committee in Washington to speak for 1 more minute. Just one more piece of ridiculous behavior.

At any rate, I am going to read some portions of the statement, because I want to sum up tonight my concern that the commonsense mandate for action on education is being ignored here in Washington, education at every level. We are ignoring education at the elementary and secondary level. We are not providing the kind of national assistance.

This garbage about local control is garbage. With local control, we were almost unprepared to fight World War II. Local control meant no programs for health for the masses of the population. We had unhealthy, emaciated bodies reporting to the draft. Local control is probably some of the worst government in the country at the local level. I hear the majority keep glorifying local control, State control. Some of the greatest amount of corruption, ineptness, and mismanagement is

at the local level in our government and at the State level.

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So there is no magic here. Local control of education has led us to where we are now. We are in trouble.

The Federal Government is only responsible for about 8 percent, between 7 and 8 percent of the budget for education in this country. With all the money spent on education, the Federal Government is responsible for only 7 or 8 percent. Most of that goes to higher education so a very tiny amount of the Federal budget goes to elementary and secondary education.

We have very little voice. They keep saying that mandates from the Federal Government do this. It really is a very small amount of policy interference that takes place as a result of requiring local governments to meet certain conditions in order to receive Federal money. This is all garbage. If we gave the schools of America, the local education agencies in the States 25 percent of the funding instead of 8 percent, we could only have 25 percent of the controls still. I mean, we could increase the amount of resources from the Federal Government from 8 to 25 percent and still the local governments and the States would have 75 percent control, 75 percent of the responsibility for funding, 75 percent of the control.

We ought to move toward the goal of 25 percent Federal funding for our education system. Education is the primary ingredient and component of national security. The greatness of the Nation, the economy of the Nation, it all is dependent on an educated populace. It all falls back on this American competitiveness. To have our competitiveness now linked to foreign professionals coming in to take care of our needs is ridiculous. We are going in just the wrong direction. We are making some stupid decisions and certainly making some savage decisions.

In the case of City University, instead of exploring the vulnerabilities of City University, the board of trustees and all the leaders of the city should be approaching the weaknesses creatively and try to transform the shortcomings of City University into opportunities. All over the world, the education of masses of youth emerging from educationally-deprived backgrounds is a vital challenge to the process of building a new global society with abundant supplies of indigenous leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I will submit my entire statement of testimony to the board of trustees of the City University of New York on April 30, 1998. I want the entire statement to be included in the RECORD so that those who did not have a chance to hear it will be able to read it.

I want to conclude by saying that City University is the oldest public university in the country. The bulk of the students, great majority of the students, now more than ever, 80 to 90 percent come out of the public schools of New York City. So the public schools

of New York City, for all that they have had to go through all these many years, have produced products that were able to go through the higher education process and emerge.

There are numerous Nobel Prize winners that have come out of City University. Some people say, well, that was a long time ago. No. There are people who graduated very recently who also are Nobel Prize winners. Nobel Prizes for medicine, Nobel Prizes for physics, Nobel Prizes for economics, Nobel Prizes for a whole range of items that have come out of City University. Their graduates are teaching and have higher positions in universities all across the country. They have been sort of missionaries to the higher education community throughout the whole country.

Why now are leaders without vision attempting to wipe out the effective City University? Two hundred thousand students go to City University on a regular basis and more than 100,000 go in the evening. It is a massive educational undertaking. It would be savage, stupid and savage to destroy that institution.

It would be stupid and savage for the Congress of the United States to ignore education this year, not to fund a construction initiative, not to fund an initiative which would bring down class sizes, not to fund an initiative which would meet the information technology needs of this country with students in this country, with workers that come from the families in this country.

Why go outside to India or any other place to bring in information technology workers and say that they are necessary to save America? Why define American competitiveness by the use of foreign brainpower? Why not develop our own brainpower? Why continue down this absurd road of Lysenkoism, of superstition, of dogma which says that only vouchers and only privatization is important and ignore the fact that the President has put before us a sensible agenda, \$22 billion program for school construction, a program to lower class sizes, a program to increase reading readiness, a program to improve schools by increasing the amount of funds available for technology in the schools?

All of this is relevant, and it all relates to where we are in the world today. Our national security and our economy is directly dependent on our education system. The American people know this. Common sense tells them this. That is why education is a high priority. We should not let this session end without responding to the common sense mandate for action on education.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the testimony to which I referred:

TESTIMONY TO BE PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK BY CONGRESSMAN MAJOR OWENS, APRIL 20, 1998

Instead of exploiting the vulnerabilities of CUNY, we should approach the weaknesses

creatively and we must transform shortcomings into opportunities.

All over the world the education of masses of youth emerging from educationally deprived backgrounds is a vital challenge to the process of building a new global society with abundant supplies of indigenous leadership. If we meet this challenge of educating those who arrive in our college classrooms with inadequate preparation here in New York, in CUNY; if we can take freshmen from impoverished backgrounds with enormous skills deficits but who have normal brains and great potential; if we can take this kind of raw material and create productive and independent citizens able to take care of themselves and also serve as leaders; if we can seize the situation which presently confronts us; then we will have a system that produces a priceless global product. Using New York's great and enormously diverse population we will have developed a blueprint, a model for higher education which would be applicable anywhere in the world. The world market for such a service is almost unlimited; it would be a product of the highest value.

What is happening here in New York at CUNY is a tragedy. At a pivotal point in the life of this city, as we approach the dawn of the 21st century, there are confused but powerful forces in this city which are turning a time for triumph into a time for tears.

President Clinton has rightfully referred to America as the indispensable nation. It is not exaggerating to state that in this indispensable nation, New York is the indispensable City. In order for this City to maintain its rightful place and fully realize its destiny an open, thriving, creative CUNY is an indispensable institution. CUNY is the jewel in the crown of our unique urban civilization.

This is the moment at which we must rally our better instincts, our common sense; we must rally our cultivated logic and receptivity to the evidence provided by well-known studies. Such studies show that the record of CUNY is a laudable one. Consider the fact that the cost to educate a single student at Harvard is about \$30,000 per year; the cost at taxpayer supported West Point is more than \$120,000 per year. Despite its shoestring budgets and repeated fiscal harassments, CUNY has endured over many years, CUNY still stands in the ranks of the greatest in its production of outstanding scholars, scientists and international prize winners.

Oh what a tragedy indeed it would be if the enterprising citizens of New York would stand idly by and allow the destruction of this great monument to the genius of ordinary people. As silent intimidated sheep we can not allow the mutilation of this oldest and most magnificent system for the promotion of maximum educational opportunity for the greatest number. What a tragedy it would be if those with blurred visions and tiny spirits are allowed to oppress this greatest vehicle for insuring progress and economic justice in our city.

Open enrollment is not our enemy. Remediation is not a terrorist tactic. If education is the way out of welfare then why are powerful forces rushing to close the doors of educational opportunity. The trumpet has sounded for leadership from within CUNY. Board of trustees; faculty senates; presidents, and full-time and adjunct faculties; student governments; student bodies; all together you comprise an aggregate more than 215,000 strong. You collectively represent the best educated and most aspiring among us. You have the capacity to utilize an Athenian style democracy not driven by the uninformed and the philistines. CUNY must refine its own mission; CUNY must confront its pockets of internal corruption; CUNY must arouse itself from snugness and com-

placency; CUNY must accept the continuing challenge that the founders envisioned.

Following the principle that education adds value to each individual, we must seek ways to provide more and better education for all of our citizens. As our society grows more complex higher education becomes not a luxury but an obvious necessity. We should not shrink from the obligation to educate and add value to students at the lowest possible cost. Education at CUNY is still a bargain for our taxpayers; it is far cheaper than incarceration and still cheaper than welfare dependency. New York City alone will need thousands of new teachers over the next 10 years. The nation will need more than a million new Information Technology workers over this same decade. Let's educate and claim our rightful share of these new positions. CUNY enrollments should not be restricted. CUNY enrollments must be expanded.

In closing let me summarize my recommendations as follows.

1. To address the problem of excessive student remediation time and to make reasonable adjustments in admissions procedures, the campus presidents and faculty senates as well as other relevant higher education policy-making entities must be given no less than 6 months to prepare and present a comprehensive plan to the CUNY Board of Trustees.

2. To allow CUNY to appropriately address the problems of remediation and the maintenance of standards of excellence as well as the problems of gross infrastructure inadequacies and student-teacher ratios. The Board of Trustees must unite with the presidents; faculties and students, and the elected officials to present a full assessment of CUNY's needs as compared to similar public institutions in other states. This assessment shall serve as a blueprint for an immediate infusion of federal, state and city capital and operating funds to achieve the overhaul necessary for the building of a greater CUNY.

3. The CUNY Board of Trustees shall assume the responsibility for the issuance of an annual CUNY Report to the Citizens of New York detailing its progress on overcoming weaknesses and its short-term and long-term plans for the future. Open public hearing fully covered by the CUNY Cable Television Channel 75 must be held following the issuance of this annual report.

4. That the CUNY Board of Trustees immediately order that a minimum of two regularly scheduled hours of time be set aside each week on the CUNY Channel 75 for the presentation of a cross-section of viewpoints on the present CUNY restructuring discussions and on CUNY policies in general.

5. That the CUNY Board of Trustees also support the following two initiatives presented in attachments to this statement.

A. An amendment to the Higher Education Assistance Act which proposes the establishment of partnerships between higher education institutions and community based organizations to sponsor store front computer and telecommunications training centers.

B. A proposal for greater CUNY involvement in promoting the immediate and long-term fiscal stability and prosperity of New York City.

CUNY must not allow itself to be invaded and oppressed by barbarians. Outsiders of any kind should not be allowed to stampede CUNY into destructive restructuring. CUNY must be held accountable by citizens and public officials but CUNY should never be invaded; it should never be conquered and it should never be occupied by political and philistine forces.

At CUNY we need scholarly expertise combined with the wisdom of the best and most experienced leadership in this city to cor-

rect, redesign, and refine that which exists already. At CUNY we need giant minds and extraordinary spirits to usher and lift a good university to a new level of greatness in the 21st century. New York is the nation's indispensable city. In this indispensable city, the institution that is most clearly indispensable for a prosperous future is CUNY.

FISCAL FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR NEW YORK CITY INSTITUTIONS FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Economic Development and Revenue.

Each institution should have a tourism promotion program to facilitate bringing in visitors for conferences, conventions, seminars, etc.

Each should forge linkages with "sister colleges" throughout the Nation and the world.

Each institution should have one or several in-depth cultural and language institutes and/or collections related to a nationality, ethnic, or religious group. It should declare itself a "world center" for that group.

Each institution should be related to the development of some museum or annual exhibition or festival with linkages to some recurring tourism events.

Each institution should organize and support an enhanced sports and game program in recognition of the rapidly expanding dollar value of all aspects of the sports and game industries.

Each institution should develop an organized program for promoting on-campus student entrepreneurs and industries located in the vicinity of the campus which employ students. Industries utilizing faculty knowledge and expertise should share profits with the colleges.

Each institution should have an organized and highly visible volunteer corps available to assist with city emergencies and special projects showing the taxpayers that students are an integral part of the life of the city while enhancing the compassion image of the city.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CRANE (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today until 12:30 p.m. on account of illness.

Ms. CARSON (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of attending a family funeral.

Mr. ANDREWS (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today before 2:00 p.m. on account of attending a funeral.

Ms. STABENOW (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of OBEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. EDWARDS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. COYNE, for 5 minutes, today.